

## EXCAVATIONS AT HÂJÎÂBÂD, 1977 FIRST PRELIMINARY REPORT

BY

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### I. *Introduction*

The large village of Hâjîâbâd is situated at the western limit of a valley, some 60 km south-southwest of Dârâb (280 km east of Shiraz) — a provincial center of eastern Fars, which replaced the abandoned Dârâbgird (Fig. 1).

The soil in the greater part of this valley, particularly that of the lower central section, is too salty to be cultivated. Moreover, the peculiar pattern of the rainy season creates more agricultural difficulties. Heavy rainfall comes at the end of the winter (Feb.-March) and floods the entire valley. Unfortunately, the rest of the year, the valley remains arid. Furthermore, whereas the annual rate of precipitation could conceivably be sufficient for dry farming if it were evenly distributed throughout the season, its concentration in such a short period of time makes artificial irrigation the only viable alternative. Even then, agriculture is possible only on the better drained slopes between the valley's lower levels and the surrounding mountains<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to references in early Islamic authors and European travellers (who were primarily interested in the ruins of Dârâbgird and the Naqsh-i-Rustam relief), two scholars, Sir -A. Stein and P. de

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<sup>1</sup> This area is located in the "transition zone" of the Zagros, which extends from the Kârûn river to Bandar-i-Abâs (cf. W. B. FISHER, 1968, in W. B. FISHER, ed., "Physical Geography", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, p. 26). "Occurrence of salt plugs" and a "distinctly more unreliable and sporadic" rainfall are mentioned as characteristic of this transition zone. More research is obviously necessary to see whether the Dârâb and Hâjîâbâd areas do not in fact belong to a microclimate zone. My own observations about the period of heavy rainfall, although limited to one season, are echoed in Stein's work, and would have the area belong to such a microclimate zone. His brief digging on a site in the western portion of the Dârâb plain had to be stopped on March 15th-16th because of heavy rains. Cf. A. STEIN, 1936, "An archaeological Tour in Ancient Persis", *Iraq*, vol. III,2, p. 187.

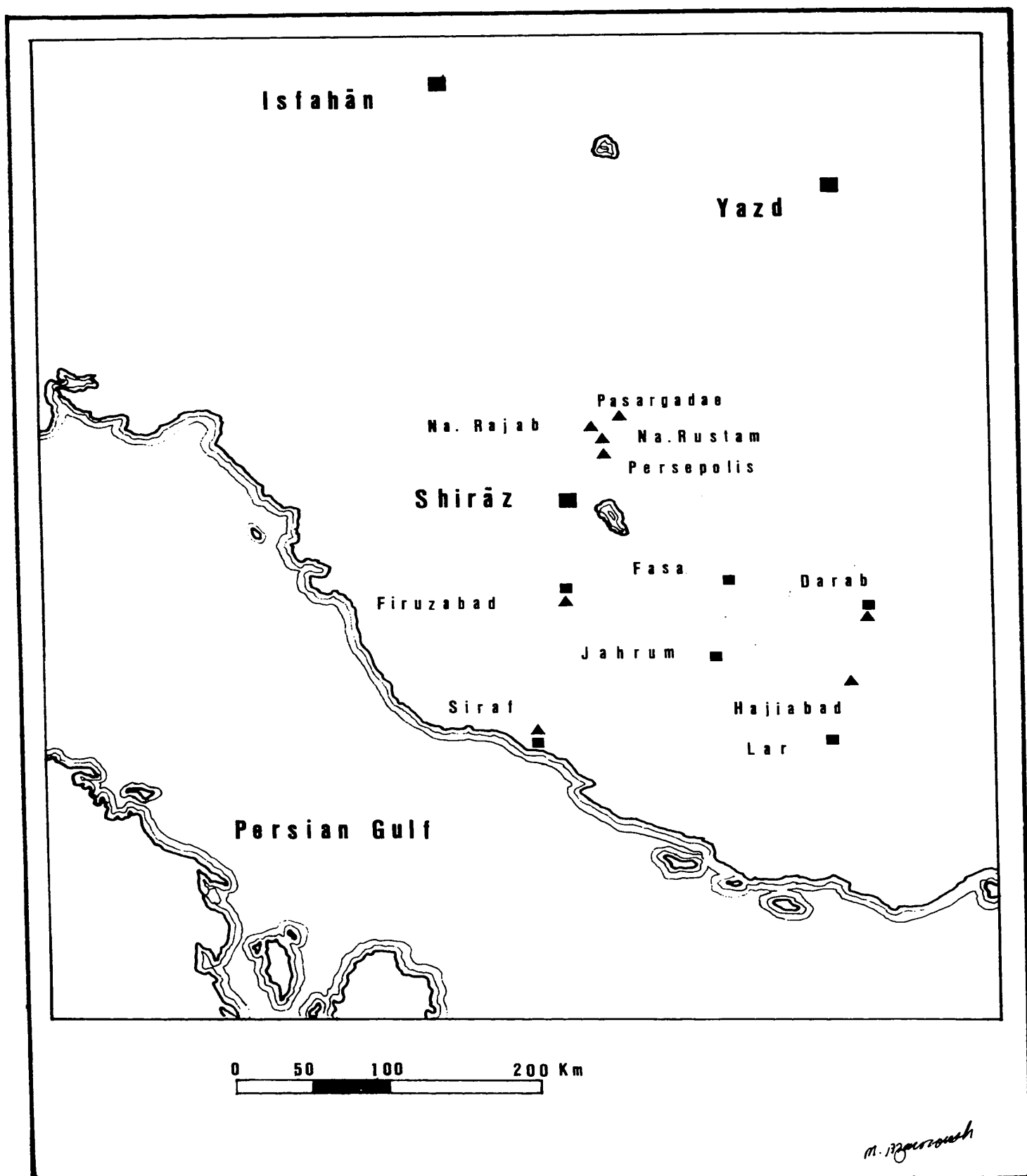


Fig. 1. Southern Iran (by M. Azarnoush).

Miroschedji, have contributed the basic modern archaeological studies of the area <sup>2</sup>.

These studies, however, were limited in scope, as neither of these two scholars visited Hâjîâbâd, or any area further south. While in Khusû, Sir A. Stein commissioned someone else to inspect the remains of Hâjîâbâd on his behalf. The resultant conclusion was that "... the mounds there reported dated from Muhammedan times ..." <sup>3</sup>. de Miroschedji seems to have got no further than Khusû either <sup>4</sup>.

Thus, prior to our excavation of Tull-i-Sifidak near Hâjîâbâd, and our subsequent survey of that region, no archaeological information about this area was available.

## II. *The survey*

The survey <sup>5</sup> covered the area along the foot of the Mûrtalkhi mountain from the south of the excavated area and continuing to the north-east, on to the slopes of the Siyâh-Kûh, and up to and including the village of Châh-i-Sabz.

The survey revealed a rather interesting settlement pattern comprising remnants of a small town, fortification, watch towers, hamlets, religious structures and, of particular significance, the remains of an irrigation system.

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<sup>2</sup> A. STEIN, 1936, pp. 112-225. P. de MIROSCHEDJI, 1972, "Prospections dans les vallées de Fasa et Dârâb". *Proceedings of the 1st annual Symposium of archaeological Research in Iran*, Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, pp. 1-8. A third survey, undertaken by Mr. Tavalloli, once head of the Fars Province archaeological Department, has not been published yet.

<sup>3</sup> A. STEIN, 1936, pp. 202-3.

<sup>4</sup> P. de MIROSCHEDJI, 1972, fig. 1. We are not quite certain if Khusû was in fact the last step in de Miroschedji's survey. On his survey map, which shows the prehistoric sites of the area, Khusû appears to be the last area to be surveyed.

<sup>5</sup> Our time, it will be remembered, was limited. Nevertheless, we undertook brief expeditions to several sites near Hâjîâbâd. We felt that even a cursory archaeological survey of these areas would be of value in programming the schedule of the next season. Unfortunately, the complete survey of the area (scheduled for the winter of 1978) did not take place. Consequently, our information about these sites remains cursory and therefore incomplete. Except in two cases, these sites have not been measured. Their topography is not known, and their location on the map is approximate. The two exceptions (to be discussed in two studies in progress) are a Chahâr Tâq and another structure not far from it; this second site is considered to have been a religious monument as well.

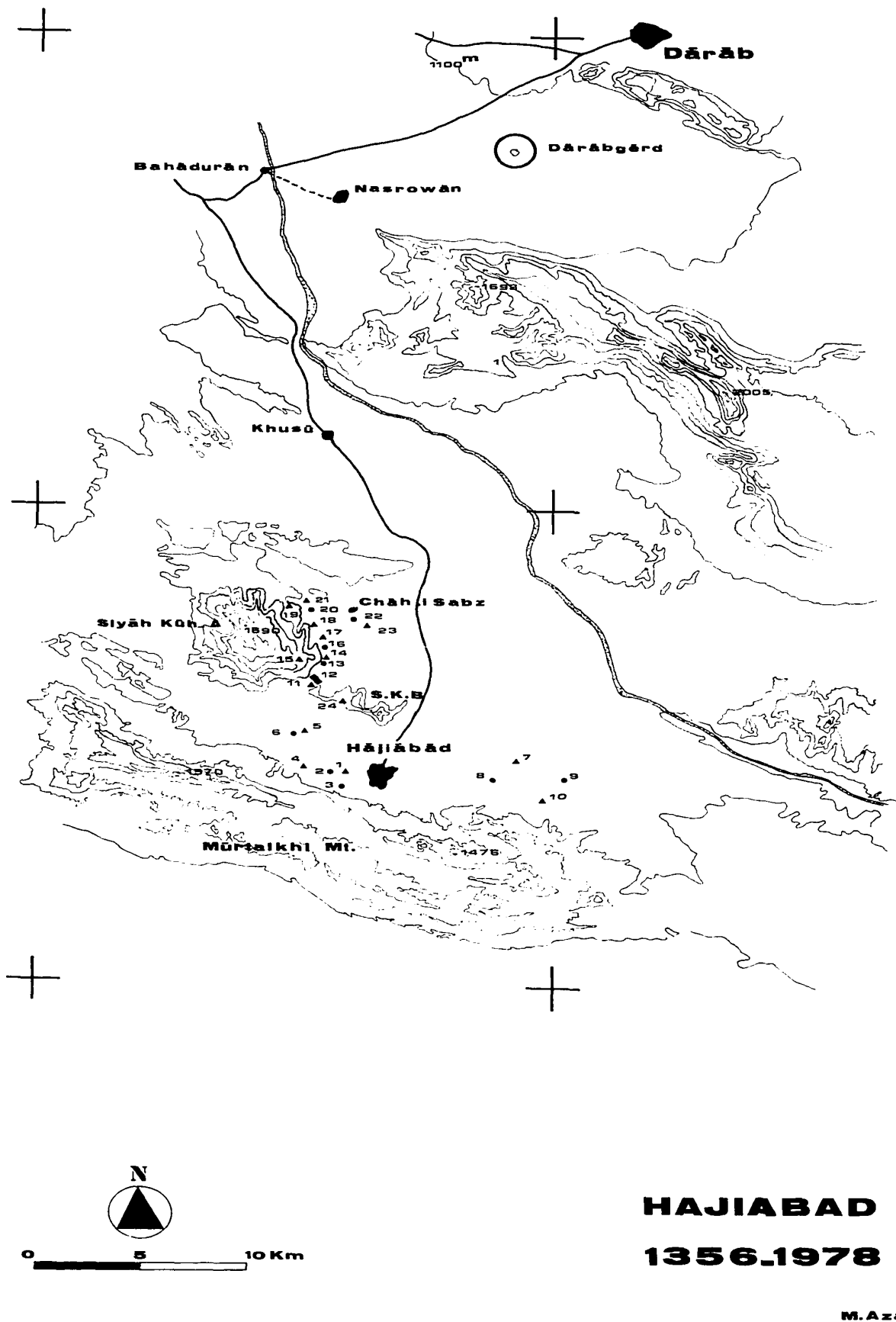


Fig. 2. Dārāb — Hājiābād area (by M. Azarnoush).

The town (Fig. 2, n° 21) already well protected by the Siyâh-Kûh to the west and north, enjoyed additional protection in the form of fortifications and a defensive wall. Belonging to this network are the remains of fortifications discovered atop that section of the mountain which is situated just to the south-west (Fig. 2, n° 19). The remnants of at least two long walls of unworked stones (running along the eastern edge of the mountain) are easily discernible here. Moreover, remains of several rooms were found near the northern edge of the mountain peak, where, thanks to the nearly vertical precipice, no defensive walls were needed. Finally, on the slope between these walls and rooms, two cylindrical wells or cisterns (255 cm and 150 cm in diameter) were observed.

A gorge running north-east/south-west connects the town area (i.e. that of the village of Châh-i-Sabz) with Hâjîâbâd. This passage was blocked by a wall which ran from one mountain (Siyâh-Kûh A) to another (Siyâh-Kûh B) (Fig. 2, n° 12). Only traces of this wall's foundation are still visible. In addition, there is a small mound adjacent to the wall on the Hâjîâbâd side, near where the modern path links the two areas (Fig. 2, n° 11).

This could well have been a gate room or a tower. If it turns out to have been a tower, then we should expect to find similar structures along the wall in future surveys.

The distinction between a tower and a gate-house is significant. If a gate-house, the structure would have been placed inside the defended area; if a tower, outside. Therefore, if the remains are those of a gate-house, then the wall was built to defend and protect the Hâjîâbâd area, and vice versa.

Another fortification (Fig. 2, n° 15) — or perhaps a watch tower — had been built on the eastern side of Siyâh-Kûh A: its remains dominate the gorge. The main part of this structure is more or less a circular section atop a projection of the mountain. To the east of these remains are remnants of the wall that defended the easy access to the fortifications. At the edge of the projection to the east, and not far from the wall, there is a well or cistern (170 cm in diameter). All these structures were built with unworked stones and mortar.

Another cylindrical construction is visible on the peak of the southern branch of the mountain (Siyâh Kûh B). Built near the steep slope, it faces the Hâjîâbâd area, affording an ideal view of the area in question. Its location strongly suggests that the structure was another component

of the town's defensive network. We accordingly labelled it "Watch Tower" (Fig. 2, n° 24).

The remains of a double Chahâr-Tâq were discovered on a small spur of the north-eastern slope of Siyâh-Kûh A, not far from the town (Fig. 2, n° 18).

Remains of several other structures — some clearly consisting of four rectangular pillars, were found between the Chahâr-Tâq and the opening of the gorge. We were able to investigate only one of these structures, and we have surmised that it had a religious function (Fig. 2, n° 17).

Small settlements (Fig. 2, n° 4, 5, 10) are situated along the slopes of the mountains. They seem to be following wells which were dug along the lower levels of the slopes. A linear settlement pattern becomes obvious. It appears to be following not an actual river, but an underground water deposit, of limited capacity perhaps, and, considering the technological drawback of the period, accessible only in those places.

The wells are rectangular. Their interiors are built entirely with unworked stone and gypsum-like mortar. There is a cistern in front of each well; and with the exception of a cylindrical one, they are all rectangular. Well n° 3 has a partially preserved small canal (yet another component of the irrigation system) which was built with unworked stones and mortar and plastered with a hard, dark mortar.

### III. *Excavation*

In the summer of 1976, in the course of extensive bulldozing (for agricultural or constructional purposes) some stuccoes were uncovered at a mound to the north of Hâjîâbâd. This mound is called Tull-i-Sifîdak. At that time, the head of the Hâjîâbâd gendarmerie intervened to save the site<sup>6</sup>.

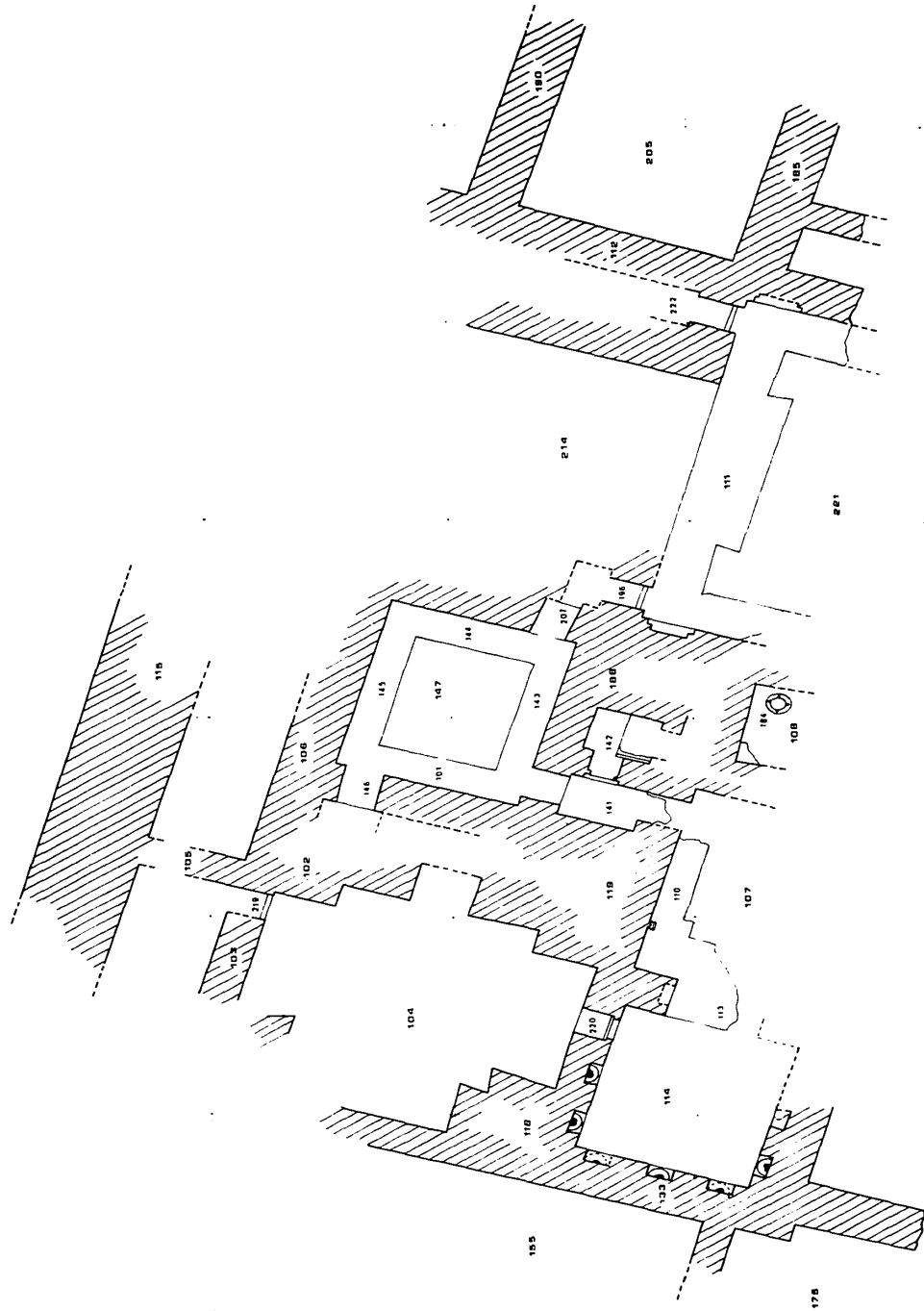
Some of the objects from this fortuitous discovery were exhibited during the 6th annual Symposium of Archaeological Research in Iran (October 31 - November 30, 1976) held in Tehran under the auspices of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research. One of the lectures

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<sup>6</sup> Warmest thanks must be extended to those responsible, in one way or another, for saving the site: particularly, Warrant Officer Mohammady, the head of the Hâjîâbâd gendarmerie at the time, and Mr. Islami, the head of the Archaeological Department of the Shiraz Office of Culture and Art.



Fig. 3. Hājiābād — Tull-i Sifīdak. Contour Map (by M. Azarnoush).





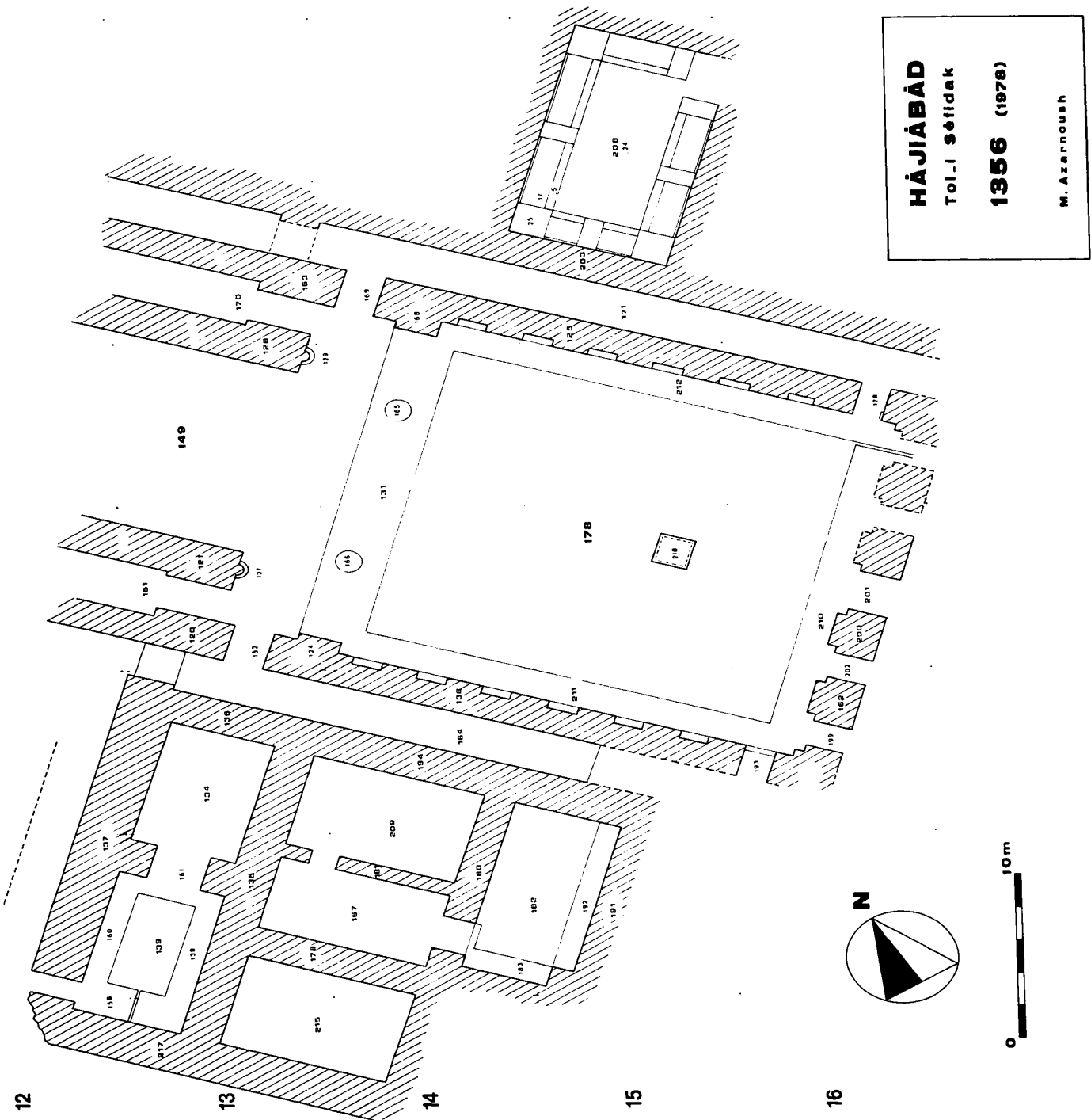


Fig. 4. HâjĪĀBÂD — Tull-i Sifidak. The Manor (by M. Azarnoush).

presented at this symposium was devoted to the identification of a royal bust (Pl. I) found among these stuccoes<sup>7</sup>.

Shortly after the Symposium, the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research organised the first systematic excavation of the site under the direction of the present writer<sup>8</sup>.

The site is severely damaged, with nearly 60 per cent of the mound removed. The destruction extends so deeply, that in some areas even the foundations of the structure are no longer traceable (Fig. 3, Pl. II).

The main body of this site is a more or less circular area of about 9000 m<sup>2</sup>, of which only 1275 m<sup>2</sup> have been completely excavated and fully documented so far (by the expedition referred to above). This structure was a palatial building of unbaked bricks, in which, unlike other remains in the area, stone is scarcely used.

Of the part already excavated, three distinct sections suggest three possible functions (Fig. 4).

#### *A. Ceremonial or Official Section*

This section comprises mainly two courtyards (Fig. 4, n° 178 and 221) and two eyvans (Fig. 4, n° 149 and 214). The first courtyard is rectangular, accessible from its southern (short) side through five doorways. The middle one of these is slightly wider than the others, which are practically of equal width. Unpaved for the most part, this courtyard has a plastered sidewalk running along the walls. The longitudinal walls are decorated with niches set slightly above the sidewalk level.

Above the niches, which are simply plastered, ran bands of geometric decorations. Near the southeastern and western corners of the courtyard, two narrow doorways replace the niches. These lead to two corridors

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<sup>7</sup> The royal bust, first published in the Catalogue of this exhibition, was identified by Mr. Iraj MOSHIRI (cf. *Exposition des dernières découvertes archéologiques 1976-1977*, Musée Iran Bastan, 31 octobre - 30 novembre 1977, Téhéran, pp. 13-14). The lecture in which this identification was proclaimed — delivered by Mr. Moshiri at this Symposium — remains, as far as I know, unpublished.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Mr. F. Bagherzadeh, General Director of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research at the time, for his constant support through every stage of our work in Hâjiâbâd. The members of this expedition were: Miss Shahin Atefi, Mrs. Mahroch Parvin, Mr. Mohammad Jamali (archaeologists); Mr. Bijan Khademi (driver); Messrs Mohsen Alikhani and Morteza Moussavi (Foremen). I thank them all warmly for their friendship and professional assistance. I wish also to thank Mr. Miltiades Papatheofanes for reading this article with me during its editorial stage.

which run north-south on each side behind the lateral walls of the courtyard. A two-step rectangular socle near the center (almost exactly on the north-south axis of the courtyard), is perhaps what is left of an altar.

There was a portico at the northern part of the courtyard. Its roof appears to have been supported by a pair of piers and two columns. Traces of the latter are still perfectly preserved in the partly plastered floor of this section.

There are five openings leading to the portico, three of which face the courtyard. These three constitute a main central eyvan (149), flanked by two much narrower openings of two lateral corridors (151-170) — one on each side of the main eyvan. This triple eyvan resembles those of Parthian and Sassanian buildings in Hatra<sup>9</sup>, Ashur<sup>10</sup>, Dura<sup>11</sup>, Kish<sup>12</sup>, Damghan<sup>13</sup> and Emarat-i-Khosrow<sup>14</sup> provided, of course, that the tirelessly published plans and tentative reconstructions of the latter are correct.

The two other openings (152 and 169) which face each other lead from the portico (at its eastern and western ends) to those corridors

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<sup>9</sup> O. REUTHER, 1938, *Parthian Architecture*, A. U. POPE, *A Survey of Persian Art*, New York, fig. 103. A. GODARD, 1962, *L'art de l'Iran*, Paris, p. 156, fig. 153, pl. 90. D. SCHLUMBERGER, 1969-1970, *L'Orient hellénisé*, Baden-Baden, p. 128, fig. 47, pls. p. 125-126. M. A. R. COLLEDGE, 1977, *Parthian Art*, London, p. 48, fig. 19, pl. I.

<sup>10</sup> O. REUTHER, 1938, p. 436 Fig. III; A. GODARD, 1962, fig. 154; D. SCHLUMBERGER, 1969, figs. 39-40; M. A. R. COLLEDGE, 1977, fig. 216.

<sup>11</sup> A. PERKINS, 1973, *The Art of Dura-Europos*, Oxford, pp. 14-5, pl. 3-4 (Citadel Palace II and Temple of Zeus Megistos I).

<sup>12</sup> O. REUTHER, 1938, pp. 538-9. L. C. WATELIN, 1938, *The Sasanian Buildings near Kish*, A. U. POPE, *A Survey of Persian Art*, New York, vol. I, pp. 584-6 (Palaces I-II).

<sup>13</sup> F. KIMBALL, 1932, *A Sasanian Palace of Tepe Hisar*, *The Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin*, vol. 27, n° 147, p. 121. E. F. SCHMIDT, 1937, *The Sasanian Palace of Tepe Hissar. Excavations at Tepe Hissar, Iran, 1931-1933*, Chapter IX, Philadelphia, p. 327, fig. 172, pl. LXXII-LXXIX. F. KIMBALL, 1937, *The Sasanian Building at Tepe Hissar*, in E. F. SCHMIDT, 1937, Chapter X, p. 347, fig. 176. O. REUTHER, 1938, *Sasanian architecture*, in A. U. POPE, *A Survey ...*, p. 540. F. KIMBALL, 1938, *The Sasanian building at Damghan (Tepe Hisâr)* in A. U. POPE, *A Survey ...*, pp. 579-583.

<sup>14</sup> O. REUTHER, 1938, p. 54, figs. 153-4. A. GODARD, 1962, p. 224, fig. 181. L. VANDEN BERGHE, 1959, *L'archéologie de l'Iran ancien*, p. 98, Fig. 29-30. I obviously do not intend to compare the plan of the three-aisled eyvans of Kish, Damghan or Emarat-i-Khosrow with the triple eyvan — if we can call it so — of Hâjîâbâd. The aisled eyvans are rather similar to the form of the aisled hall of a basilica (O. REUTHER, 1938, p. 539). At Hâjîâbâd, on the other hand, these three components of the eyvan are distinctly separated. Let me explain once more that the comparison concerns only the frontal view.

(164 and 171) which flank the courtyard (178). They continue to the north and run parallel to the lateral corridors of the main eyvan (151 and 170).

Unfortunately, the northern part of the eyvan (149) and the corridors were totally destroyed; the plan of this section will perforce remain incomplete.

The layout of this ensemble of courtyard-portico-eyvan and the lateral corridors at Hâjîâbâd resembles greatly similar elements in Ayadanâ at Susa<sup>15</sup> and some of the excavated architectural remains at Aï Khanoum<sup>16</sup>. A more remote similarity could be suggested between the same section of Hâjîâbâd and "the main wing" of the Harem of Xerxes as well<sup>17</sup>.

There are reasons to believe that there is another large courtyard to the north of the main eyvan (221). A plastered sidewalk appears to have surrounded the unpaved portion of the open area here as well. Of the two rows of niches which probably existed on the lower part of the longitudinal walls before the recent destruction, only two niches are still traceable. They are situated at the northernmost extremity of the eastern and western walls of this courtyard.

To the north of this open area (221), as in the case of the larger courtyard (178), there is another eyvan (214). Its two lateral passages (196 and 222) represent here again a triple eyvan on the façade. For reasons which will be explained presently, we were unable to excavate this eyvan extensively. Its plan therefore remains incomplete.

### B. *Religious Section*

The lateral passage (196) to the west of eyvan 214 leads to a complex immediately to the west.

This complex comprises several rooms and comparatively smaller open areas which are interconnected by several corridors.

The passage (196) leads to a small rectangular courtyard (147). An opening (146) at the north-west corner of this courtyard leads to a

<sup>15</sup> M. DIEULAFOY, 1893, *L'Acropole de Suse d'après les fouilles exécutées en 1884-1886*, Paris, pp. 411-6.

<sup>16</sup> H. P. FRANCFORT, 1977, Le Plan des maisons gréco-bactriennes et le problème des structures de "type mégaron" en Asie Centrale et en Iran, *Colloques internationaux CNRS*, Paris, pp. 267-280.

<sup>17</sup> E. F. SCHMIDT, 1953, *Persepolis I*, Chicago, fig. 105.

corridor which probably came to an end in room 104. This asymmetrical, cruciform room was also accessible through a doorway on its southernmost side (220). Another passage (219) led from the north-east corner of the room to a large corridor (223) which probably ran around the entire building. To the south of room 104 is a rectangular room (114) with at least seven niches in its northern, western and southern walls, each of which contains remnants of a statue. A rather large doorway on the eastern wall leads from this room (114) to another rectangular area (107). The latter was probably a small courtyard. This courtyard (107) was in turn connected to courtyard 147 through another corridor (141). An intricate passage (142) leads from this corridor (141) to room 108 — probably a rest room.

Unfortunately, the southern part of this section is destroyed to such an extent, that no reconstruction of the plan for rooms 114 and 108 and for courtyard 107 is any longer possible. Nor can we confirm any possible connecting passage between courtyards 107 and 22.

### *C. Private Section*

Walls 137 and 194 to the north and to the east separate the ceremonial (or official) section from the area which we have labelled “domestic” or “private”. A corridor to the north of wall 137 leads, from a dwelling complex of this domestic area to the ceremonial section. This particular complex consists of a small courtyard (139) and a room (134). Another one, comprising two rooms (167 and 209) and one courtyard (182) is situated to the south of the previous one. The entrance to this second dwelling may well have been located somewhere in the southern or western walls of its courtyard. Unfortunately the excavation did not extend this far.

### *D. Other Excavated Areas*

Room 208, situated to the east of wall 203 (which in turn is situated immediately to the east of corridor 171), appears to have been a dining room<sup>18</sup>. We have found several benches and table-like structures here. These table-like features, some 50 cm above the floor level, are made

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<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Guity Azarpay (UC Berkeley) for the discussion we had about the similar architectonic features uncovered in some Central Asian sites and reliably identified as dining rooms.

of rubble stones (of different size) and gypsum. Everything here is plastered, except the floor of the room and the bottom of the benches.

Five more additional rooms and/or courtyards, located to the west of the religious section (i.e. west of wall 133) were excavated for the most part. The excavations carried out here, however, are not indicated on the plan of the site. We had to bring the excavation season to a close, for one. There was therefore not enough time to have these areas fully cleared; and, as doubts remained about their exact form, we deemed it more prudent not to include them. What was uncovered, however, suggests that at least some of these rooms served as workshops for the artists and artisans who were responsible for the decoration of the entire building.

Room 215, to the west of the private section, is another component of this area. From what the excavation shows, there is no link between this room and room 167 to the east, nor with courtyard 139 to the north. The entrance of this room, then, must have been located somewhere to the west or south.

A wide and long corridor appears to have separated the entire building from its outer massive walls. A partly preserved wall (105) in the northern limit of the excavated area, and another one (extending at corner of walls 190 and 112) at the eastern part, lead us to suppose that this corridor was, in all likelihood, divided into sections.

#### *E. Decoration*

Only sections A and B appear to have been decorated (on the evidence of the excavation so far).

The decoration of section A consists of murals and stucco. Here, courtyard 178 as well as its portico are decorated by stucco exclusively. Inside the courtyard, above the niches (c. 63 cm high), a band of Greek keys, framed by two rows of egg and dart motifs, runs along the western and eastern walls. Immediately above this band runs another one, consisting of semi-cylindrical elements which are vertical and parallel to each other. The remaining wall thereabove must have probably been smoothly plastered.

Corresponding engaged columns were uncovered in the portico, on either side of eyvan 149. These columns were of simple shaft and decorated base. The stuccoed decorative relief of this column base is

an almost exact copy of the "drooping leaf" motif found on the columns of the Main Hall of Apadana, and the Council Hall in Persepolis<sup>19</sup>.

Two slightly oversized stucco busts found near these demi-columns probably rested on them; and it appears that they were placed just below the arch springings of the main eyvan and the lateral corridors. The busts are those of two men. Of these, one in frontal position is bearded, while the other, at three-quarters, probably was not (depicting a youth?).

Wall paintings replace the stucco (as decorations) in the interior of the eyvan. Parts of an oversized portrait in frontal position and several smaller ones in three-quarters, were uncovered at the north-east corner of a destroyed portion of the site. The oversized portrait could well depict the same bearded gentleman of the bust described hereabove. If so, then we may suppose a portrait of the other (unbearded?) man as well.

Presumably, the latter portrait would have been painted on the left side. Unfortunately, this side has been destroyed for ever, as the destruction in the north-west is more devastating than in the north-east.

No traces of decorative stucco were found in the second large courtyard area (221). It is not clear whether this is due to destruction or lack of original decoration here.

Several tests concluded at different places inside this second eyvan (214) suggested that the entire area is still covered by layers of fallen murals. The soil here was removed extensively; down to only a few centimeters above the floor. As a result, the layered remnants of the murals were badly pressed by the weight of the bulldozer. We did not attempt to remove them. The expedition lacked the necessary experts for such a delicately difficult task (i.e. unearthing the paintings and carrying out sensitive preservation procedures under such adverse conditions). For these reasons, a full excavation of the area was not attempted during this- and so far only-season<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> E. F. SCHMIDT, 1953, p. III, figs. 40 (Apadana), 54 (Council Hall).

<sup>20</sup> When the excavation was nearing a close, Mr. Andalib of the I.C.A.R. laboratories, was sent to work on the murals, at the expedition request. In the few remaining days, he studied the remains and conceived a schedule for the following season. I.C.A.R. and the expedition succeeded in having him return to the site at the end of the spring. Aided by two capable foremen, Mr. Andalib was to remove the mural fragments uncovered in the first eyvan<sup>149</sup>. I have great pleasure in thanking him for his collaboration, and congratulating him for his professionalism — so much in evidence in the beautiful job he did. To prevent further damages, until all the murals could be unearthed and removed.

Room 114, on the other hand, had been richly ornamented, stucco being the only decorative material. Except for a small engaged column in courtyard 107, no traces of wall painting or stucco were found in other areas of the religious section<sup>21</sup>.

The stuccoes in room 114 depict royal and aristocratic busts (Pl. III), female statues in the niches, nude male and female statuettes, as well as floral, faunal and geometric motifs. Apparently, many of these are of symbolic significance. For example, a slightly undersized female statue in the niches, the nudes faunal and avian representations (e.g. a lion and an eagle), suggested that this may have been a cultic area of the building.

On this evidence, and the similarity of the layout of room 104 to several religious structures<sup>22</sup>, a religious function can be attributed to this area.

The statues in the niche and the nude female statuettes, for example, may refer to the cult of a fertility goddess-presumably Anahita. The nude small boys with bunches of grapes in their hands may refer to some sort of dionysiac tradition, akin again perhaps to Anahita's cult<sup>23</sup>.

The presence of the busts, however, renders our hypothesis less secure. Are these busts of cultic significance? If yes, they may represent ancestor cult, in the vein of *post mortem* deification.

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we covered the area of eyvan 214 with a layer of soil, and plastered it with kah-gel (mud and straw).

<sup>21</sup> The fact that we did not find any murals or stuccoes in other areas of the religious section does not necessarily mean that no such decorations existed before the bulldozer destruction. In fact, the royal bust found in the course of the earth removing activities prior to our excavation may have come from the small courtyard (107). We shall not discuss problems of this nature in this preliminary report, however.

<sup>22</sup> *Bishapur*: R. GHIRSHMAN, 1938, Les fouilles de Châpour (Iran) (Deuxième campagne 1936/37), *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. XII, 1, pp. 15-7, pl. X. — G. SALLES, 1942, Nouveaux documents sur les fouilles de Châpour, IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> campagnes, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. XIII, 3-4, pl. XVIIIb. — R. GHIRSHMAN, 1956, *Bichâpour*, Paris, vol. II, p. 11, plan II B. — R. GHIRSHMAN, 1962, *Iran, Parthes et Sassanides*, Paris, pp. 139-40, fig. 177. *Nûsh-i-Jân*: D. STRONACH, 1969, Excavations at Tepe Nûsh-i-Jân, *Iran*, vol. VII, pp. 9-11, fig. 3. — M. ROAF and D. STRONACH, 1973, Tepe Nûsh-i-Jân, 1970: Second Interim Report, *Iran*, vol. XI, pp. 133-8, figs. 1-2. — Idem, 1978, Excavations at Tepe Nûsh-i-Jân, Part I — A third interim Report, *Iran*, vol. XVI, pp. 1-3, figs. 1-20. *Qûmis*: J. HANSMANN and D. STRONACH, 1974, Excavations at Shahr-i-Qûmis, 1971, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 8-22.

<sup>23</sup> D. SHEPHERD, 1964, Sasanian Art in Cleveland, *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 51, p. 86. — Idem, 1966, Two silver Rhyta, *BCMA*, vol. 53, p. 289.



More extensive research into this aspect of the report is obviously required. It would be too rash and too simplistic to accept one suggestion or the other at this stage. After all, rooms 104 and 114 could also be considered as parts of the ceremonial section of the building. Cult-related symbols do not automatically necessitate religious function. Scenes tentatively interpreted as referring to a fertility goddess could well be those of daily life amusement and entertainment. The busts, in this case, would probably represent noble relations of the owner of the manor.



Fig. 5. Coin of Shâpûr II (Ph. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale — Cabinet des Médailles, Paris).

#### F. *Date of the Building*

The royal busts and the form of their crown constitute the most important evidence for dating this structure; although other possible research aids, such as comparative studies of the Tull-i-Sifîdak stuccoes and those of other sites, should not be ruled out.

The bust of Shâpûr II<sup>24</sup> provides a time frame within his reign.

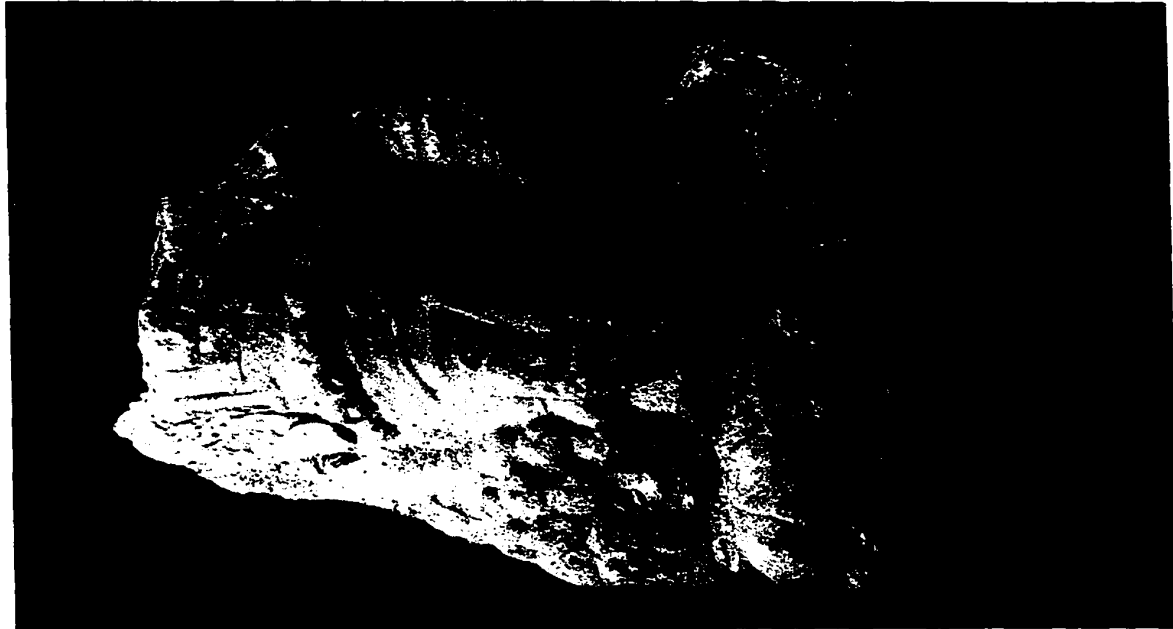
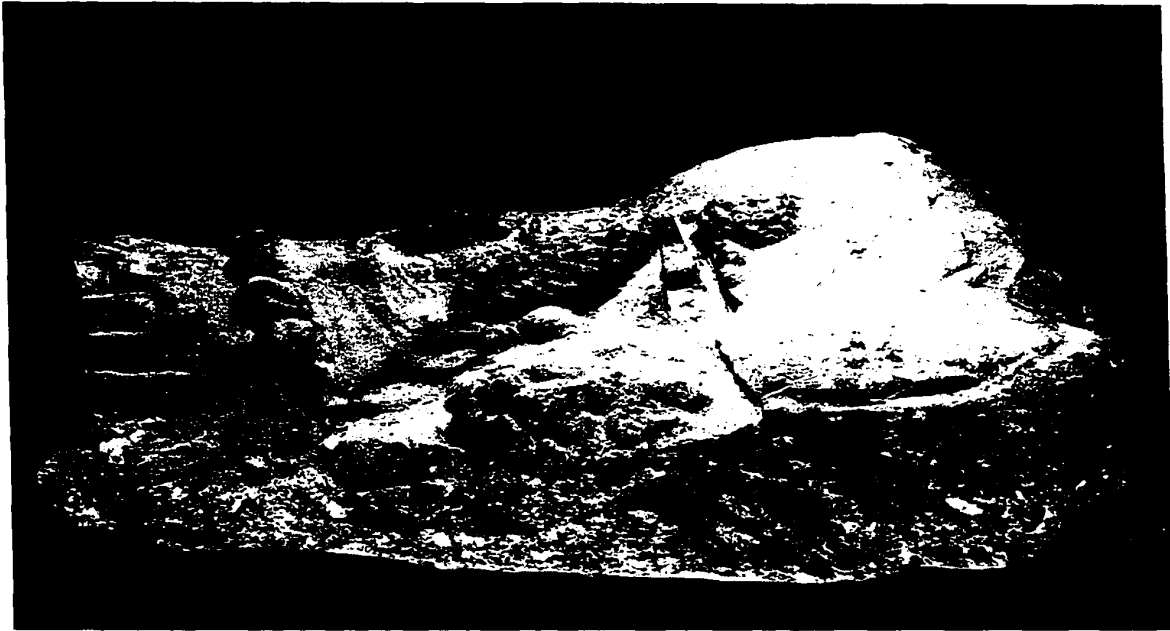
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<sup>24</sup> Identifying the royal bust as depicting Shâpûr II in this preliminary report (compare the crown of Pl. I with that of Fig. 5) does not necessarily exclude other possibilities. This problem will be dealt with in detail in an article now in preparation devoted to the royal busts of Hâjîâbâd.

i.e. 309 to 379 A.D. This will undoubtedly serve as a launching platform for further discussion.

However, this date would be acceptable only in the case where the stuccoes of room 114 can be assumed to refer to the cult of a fertility goddess or to be of secular (rather than religious) value.

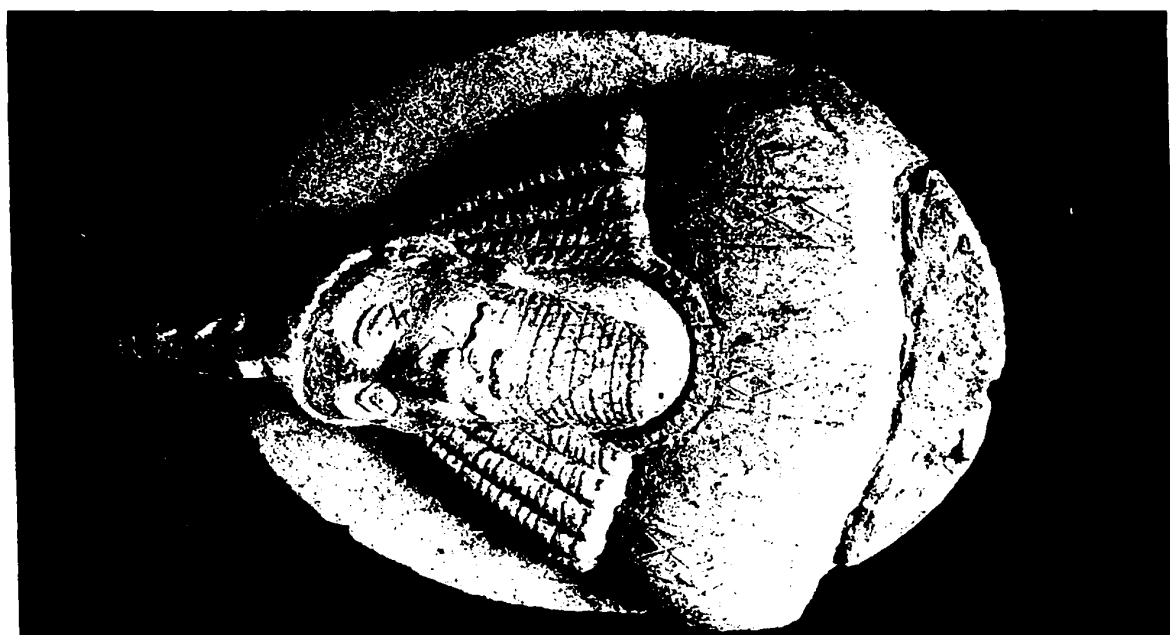
On the other hand, if the stuccoes turn out to represent ancestor cults, then the question becomes more complicated. Shâpûr II's bust would not represent the reigning king, but the royal ancestor of the manor, whose occupants are portrayed in the palace. In this case, the building would probably have to be given a post fourth century date.



Pl. I. Hājābād. Tull-i Sifūdak. Royal bust (Ph. M. Azarmoush).



Pl. II. Hâjîâbâd. Tull-i Sifîdak. The site after bulldozing (Ph. M. Azarnoush-Maillard).



Pl. III. Hājābād. Tull-i Sifīdak. Bust of an aristocrat (Ph. M. Azarnoush).